Shri Mahendra Chaudhary and that no excesses are committed against the people of Indian origin?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) No, Sir.

(c) Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry was released on 13 July, 2000. The Government of India, in close cooperation with the Commonwealth and countries like Australia, New Zealand, U.K. and others took every step possible in the circumstances to secure the early release of hostages and thereafter is trying to restore the democracy and the rule of law in the interest of all peace-loving Fijians including those of Indian origin.

Outcome of Prime Minister's visit to Lisbon

563. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister led high-power delegation to Lisbon and participated in First India-European Union summit held on 28th June, 2000;

(b) if so, the details/outcome of discussion held between the two countries;

(c) whether President of E.C. has predicted ten fold increase between Indian and E.U. bilateral trade which is at present at $20 billion; and

(d) whether during this visit difference *over* trade related issues have been narrowed down particularly E.U's indiscriminate use of anti-dumping measures, labour standards and environment as non-tarifff barriers to Indian exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA); (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Discussions at the Summit allowed both sides to review the bilateral relationship as well as to exchange views on regional and multi-lateral issues of common .concern. It was agreed that India and the E.U. will forge a new strategic partnership in the 21st century.

The India-EU. Joint Declaration provides a blueprint for upgrading the relationship to a qualitatively higher level. An Agenda for Action which encompasses joint initiatives in the political, commercial and economic fields was also agreed upon.

(c) No, Sir, Both sides, however, recognised that the current volume of bilateral trade and investment between EU and India falls far short of its potential and agreed to work jointly to promote further economic cooperation.

(d) The visit provided a useful opportunity to convey our concerns regarding trade-related protectionist measures as well as to share views on WTO-related matters. It was agreed that both sides would work to progressively liberalise trade, oppose protectionist tendencies and attempt to obtain an open, equitable and nondiscriminatory rule-based multilateral trading system.

Appointments in High Commission/Embassies in Foreign Countries

† 564. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:
PROF, RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rules fixed for appointments being made in the High Commissions/Embassies in the foreign countries are followed; if so, whether the sanction had been sought from the Ministry of External Affairs for the appointment in the Indian Embassy in London and Consulate General in Birmingham;

(b) if so, how Government had to suffer losses of crores of rupees due to irregularities committed in these embassies; and

(c) if not, the action taken by Government after fixing responsibility for the irregularities by the said embassies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The officials of the Ministry are posted to our Missions/Posts abroad in accordance with the rules and on the basis of a number of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.